

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER
LISTED

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

DEC 06 2005

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A) Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-9000a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Burr Oak School

Other name/site number 089-0710-0002

2. Location

Street & number 776 Kansas ☐ not for publication

City or town Burr Oak ☐ vicinity

State Kansas Code KS County Jewell Code 089 Zip code 66936

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☐ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☐ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Christy Davis 9/22/05
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Kansas State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of commenting official /Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

- ☐ entered in the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ☐ removed from the National Register
- ☐ other, (explain:)

Burr Oak School
Name of property

Jewell County, Kansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
Historic Public Schools of Kansas

**Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register**
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter Categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: Library

RECREATION & CULTURE: Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Romanesque

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: Limestone; Concrete
walls STONE: Limestone

roof METAL: Tin

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Name of Property Burr Oak School

County and State Jewell County, Kansas

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1899-1955

Significant Dates

1899

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Holland, J.C.

Berry, J.W.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ Previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 Burr Oak School, Jewell County

Description

Setting

Burr Oak School is located at 776 Kansas, on the northeast corner of Kansas and Washington Streets in Burr Oak, Jewell County, Kansas. The building is one block east of Highway 28 in the center of town. It shares the block with an auxiliary building to the south that once housed the school lunchroom and is now used as a senior center. The site is also home to several massive old-growth cottonwood trees. Across the street to the east is the Burr Oak Methodist Church with many stained-glass windows and bell tower. To the west is the former Burr Oak Lumber Yard building, which now houses a local business and small grocery store.

Exterior

Overall - The Burr Oak School is a two-story limestone structure with a full basement. The building features a side-facing T plan, with the leg of the T projecting westward. The building's main entrance is delineated by a truncated stone tower feature in the void in the northwest corner of the T. A wood-framed bell tower, topped by a conical roof, originally sat atop the stone feature. The roofed bell tower extension was removed after a fire. The building's principal exterior material is rough-hewn native post rock limestone laid in regular courses of alternating widths. Two bands of dressed limestone, one along the top of the windows on each level, serve to visually ground the building. The school has a shallow cross-hipped roof clad in its original pressed metal shingles. Originally, two hipped dormers pierced the hipped roof on the north and west projections. All windows are original double-hung 2/2 sash with wood-framed screens.

North Elevation - The north elevation of the building's north-projecting bay features three evenly spaced windows on each story. The north elevation of the east-projecting bay features two evenly spaced windows on each story. The north elevation of the tower has one window on each story.

East Elevation - The building's east elevation has a symmetrical configuration. There are seven windows on the second floor - from right to left there are two standard-sized windows, a narrow window, a standard-sized window, another narrow window, and two standard-sized windows. The windows on the first floor follow a similar pattern, but are interrupted by a small historic rusticated concrete addition that projects from the center of the building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2 Burr Oak School, Jewell County

Exterior cont.

South Elevation – The south elevation has two bays – the west-projecting bay and a south-projecting bay. The west-projecting bay has two standard-sized windows on each level. Near the intersection with the south-projecting bay on the second level is a fire-escape door. On the lower level near the intersection with the south-projecting bay is a narrow window. The south-projecting bay features three evenly spaced windows on each level.

West Elevation – Three of the building's bays, the north-projecting bay, the tower, and the west-facing bay, have west-facing elevations. The north-projecting bay features two windows on each level. The west elevation of the tower has one window on the second floor and the main arched entrance opening, on the first floor. The west elevation of the west-projecting bay features three evenly spaced windows on each floor.

Interior

The heavy glass front door leads into a great foyer from which three large lower-level classrooms extend. These rooms currently house the Burr Oak City Library and Burr Oak Museum. The classrooms have remained relatively untouched, except for repainting of the walls.

The wide, open staircase with oak banisters leads from the foyer to a landing with a window, and continues on to the second story. There are three large classrooms upstairs also, which have been used only for storage since the school closed in 1967. Each of the building's six classrooms has a large cloakroom with the original hooks that once held the students' coats. Each room has five to seven large windows. Slate blackboards adorn all the walls of the classrooms. All of the floors, transomed doors, and interior moldings are made of oak and are essentially in original condition. The high ceilings and walls are plastered. However, the library and museum have installed suspended ceilings.

Electrical lighting was added many years ago. Presently each classroom has large fluorescent fixtures that were possibly added in the 1940s or 1950s. The library installed new lights and some new outlets in 2002.

The basement once housed the restrooms and a utility area. Two smaller restrooms were constructed in one of the first story cloakrooms. The old furnace and restrooms in the basement are no longer in use. The only heating in the building is a gas wall heater in the library and space heaters in the smaller bathrooms and museum.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1 Burr Oak School, Jewell County

Statement of Significance

The Burr Oak School (c. 1899) is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its associations to the history of education in Kansas, and under Criterion C for its architectural significance as a turn-of-the century limestone county school designed by architect J. C. Holland. The overall context for historic schools in Kansas is described in the Multiple Property Documentation Form, *Historic Public Schools of Kansas* (MPDF). The building is an example of the Town Graded School property type and meets the registration requirements set forth in the MPDF. The building maintains a high degree of interior and exterior architectural integrity.

Historical Overview

Burr Oak was founded in 1871 by A.J. Godfrey, who built the first house along the White Rock Creek in northern Jewell County, Kansas. In 1873 a school district was organized in Burr Oak. This was the third school district in Jewell County; the first being Jewell City, and the second in Whitemound Township near Salem.

Burr Oak had two school buildings before the limestone schoolhouse was built. The Missouri Pacific Railroad came to Burr Oak in 1879 and created a surge in growth. By 1898 the second schoolhouse, which was the predecessor to the rock schoolhouse, was filled to capacity with students. Some of the students had to attend classes in the G.A.R. building across the street. In April 1899, Burr Oak residents voted 260-10 to build a new school building. It was constructed on ground that the town's founder, A.J. Godfrey, had donated to the school district.

The former schoolhouse was moved across the street and used as an opera house. Architect J.C. Holland of Topeka designed the new schoolhouse, which was constructed at a cost of \$7000 by J.W. Berry of Jewell. The schoolhouse was assembled out of limestone rock quarried from the Randall area in Jewell County. The limestone was quarried using the post-rock method. This method, common in this part of the state, used a drilling technique, metal feathers and the freeze-thaw cycle to break the stone. The stone was called "post rock" because it was used for fences on northwest and north-central Kansas farms where wood was scarce.

The school opened its doors for classes January 2, 1900. It served as both the high school and grade school until 1916. At that time, a new high school building was built and the limestone schoolhouse served as the grade school until 1967.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2 Burr Oak School, Jewell County

Architect

J.C. (James Clinton) Holland (1853-1919), the prominent Topeka architect, was employed to prepare plans, specifications and details for the school. Holland specialized in public and quasi-public buildings, designing many significant buildings in Topeka. He designed sixteen county courthouses in Kansas, schools, churches, YMCAs, jails and business buildings in Kansas and other states.

Holland was born in Lima, Ohio, received his education at Northwestern Ohio Normal University and the School of Architecture at Cornell University. Upon completion of his yearlong studies at Cornell University in 1882, Holland taught architecture at Northwestern Ohio Normal University until his move to Topeka in 1885.

In 1885 Holland moved to Topeka from an architectural practice in Toledo, Ohio, and joined C.B. Hopkins in an architectural firm that existed until 1897. Holland served as state architect from 1895 until 1897, during which time the central wing of the capitol building, except the central dome, was completed. He then served the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway as a "special architect" during the years following his service as state architect. In 1898 he established his own firm, and it was during this period that the Jewell County Jail and Burr Oak School contracts were let. In 1903 he formed a partnership with Frank Squires that lasted until 1915 when he took his son, B.A. Holland, into partnership. The firm J.C. Holland and Son continued in business after Holland's death in 1919.

Builder

The schoolhouse was built by J.W. Berry of Jewell City, Jewell County, Kansas – a man rich in history in his own right. Berry was born in Pennsylvania in 1858 and moved to Jewell County with his family at the age of 12. The Berry family homesteaded one and one-half miles west of Jewell City. In the early 1880s, Berry decided to attend college and walked to Manhattan, Kansas to do so. In 1883, J.W. Berry was one of eleven students to graduate from the Kansas State Agriculture College. Berry then returned to his hometown to establish himself as a master builder.

His superb reputation soon spread and he soon traveled to other Kansas counties to erect buildings. He specialized in bank, school, and business buildings with many of these utilizing native limestone rock. Other structures built by Berry in Jewell County are the Jewell Bank, Jewell Grade School, the Jewell County Jail, and the Burr Oak School. Most of these buildings are still standing today.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3 Burr Oak School, Jewell County

Structures built by Berry in other Kansas counties include the Beloit Mill, part of the former J.C. Penny building in Beloit, and several buildings in Norton and Concordia. He later would construct buildings in Manhattan, including some at Kansas State University, and at Emporia State College.

With the building boom at its peak in Jewell County in 1893, towns were growing and businesses were popping up over night. New residents needed houses, business buildings, churches, and schoolhouses. It was at this time that the Jewell Lumber Company incorporated. J.W. Berry was one of the owners and served on the board of directors. Berry expanded the lumber business and began purchasing the lumberyards in neighboring Jewell County towns. In 1920 he organized the Mid-West Lumber Company. When the Chicago Lumber Company went out of business, he purchased many of those yards in Washington, Republic, Jewell, Smith, and Norton Counties, with the head office in Mankato. Berry later moved to Manhattan where he became president of the Golden Belt Lumber Company. This company would eventually own a chain of lumberyards in Kansas. He continued in the lumber business until his death at the age of 82. Berry also served on the Manhattan City Park Board, was appointed to the State Board of Regents, and served as president of the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce. A rose garden is now named after him in the Manhattan City Park.

Recent History

For 68 years the limestone Burr Oak School building served area students. The school grounds were used during the summer months as a community-meeting place. A band gazebo was erected on the lawn (not extant) where the city band and other visiting bands performed concerts. Parts of the old band gazebo have been recently discovered. The community has hopes of someday restoring it and putting it back in place.

It was also on these grounds that the Chautauqua would come and pitch their tents for performances. Many baseball games and community celebration picnics were also held on the grounds. It was during the Dust Bowl days that some community members decided to plant spirea bushes on the property. Despite the drought, the citizens kept the bushes alive and some of them still exist today.

When the school district decided to build a new school building in the 1960s, the residents of Burr Oak voted to authorize the city to purchase the limestone schoolhouse from the school district, in hopes that this would keep the building from remaining empty or being torn down. The building has remained in use as a library and museum, but it is in great need of repair and preservation.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4 Burr Oak School, Jewell County

Many local residents have fond memories of attending school in the building. The museum holds antique spoons and cups with the likeness of the schoolhouse that some of the old stores in town sold as keepsakes in the early 1900s. Today the children use the grounds during the library's story hour and summer reading programs. The city maintains the lawn and building, but it is becoming increasingly difficult as the building ages, expenses increase, and populations and valuations decrease.

The history of the school is reflective of the growth and decline of the Burr Oak community and the greater development of education in Kansas. The Burr Oak School retains a high degree of architectural integrity with its original wood windows, pressed metal roof, interior woodwork, and classroom layout intact. The Burr Oak School meets the qualifications for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C as outlined in the MPDF *Historic Public Schools of Kansas*.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1 Burr Oak School, Jewell County

Bibliography

Opened for classes on January 2, 1900.

June 30, 1900 teachers and salaries (5 teachers):

G.L. Atkerson	\$60.00 per month (teacher and principal)
Fred Eaton	\$40.00 per month
Gertrude Perry	\$30.00 per month
Mabel Shaw	\$30.00 per month
Lottie Modlin	\$30.00 per month

There were two graduates in 1900.

The school had all 12 grades until 1917.

Information from:

The Burr Oak Herald
School Annuals
The Superior Express
White Rock School District
"What Price White Rock"
"Burr Oak, The Roots Run Deep" by Gloria Garman
Burr Oak Museum
Jewell County Register of Deeds

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1 Burr Oak School, Jewell County

Verbal Boundary Description

Block 6, Original Town, Burr Oak, Kansas.

Boundary Justification

This was the original site for the school.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Burr Oak School
Jewell County, KS

Section number 11 Page 9

Photographic Information

The following information is consistent for all photographs

1. Burr Oak School
2. Jewell County, KS
3. Photograph by Sarah J. Martin
4. March 15, 2005
5. Negatives on file at the Kansas State Historical Society

The following information is applicable to specific photographs

6. View from the west
7. Photo #1

6. View from the northeast
7. Photo #2

6. View from the southeast
7. Photo #3

6. Interior, entryway, view from the east
7. Photo #4

6. Interior, staircase, view from the west
7. Photo #5

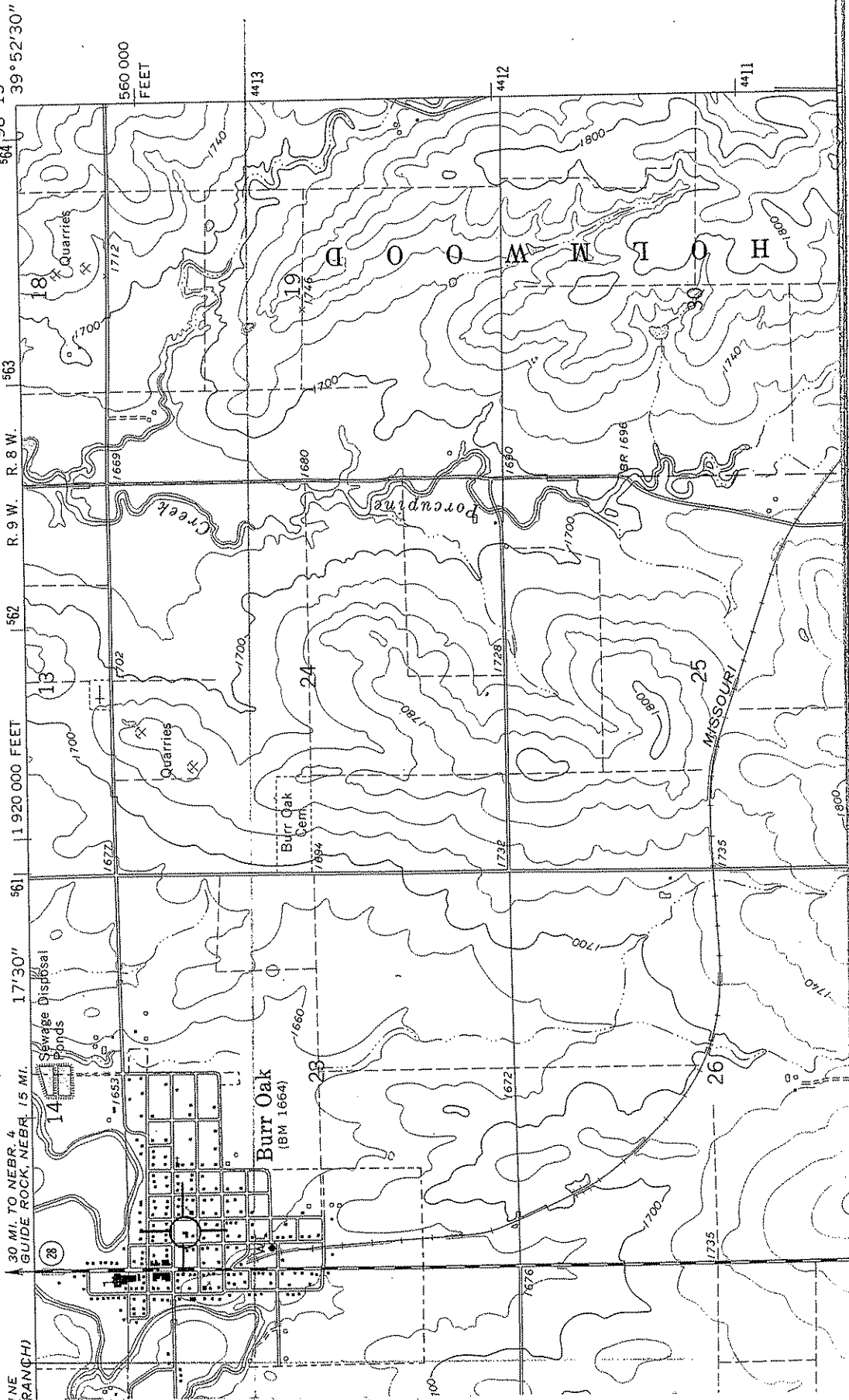
6. Interior, second story, empty classroom
7. Photo #6

6. Interior, first story, classroom
7. Photo #7

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 JEWELL CO., KANSAS
 UTM COORDINATES:
 14/559510/4413280

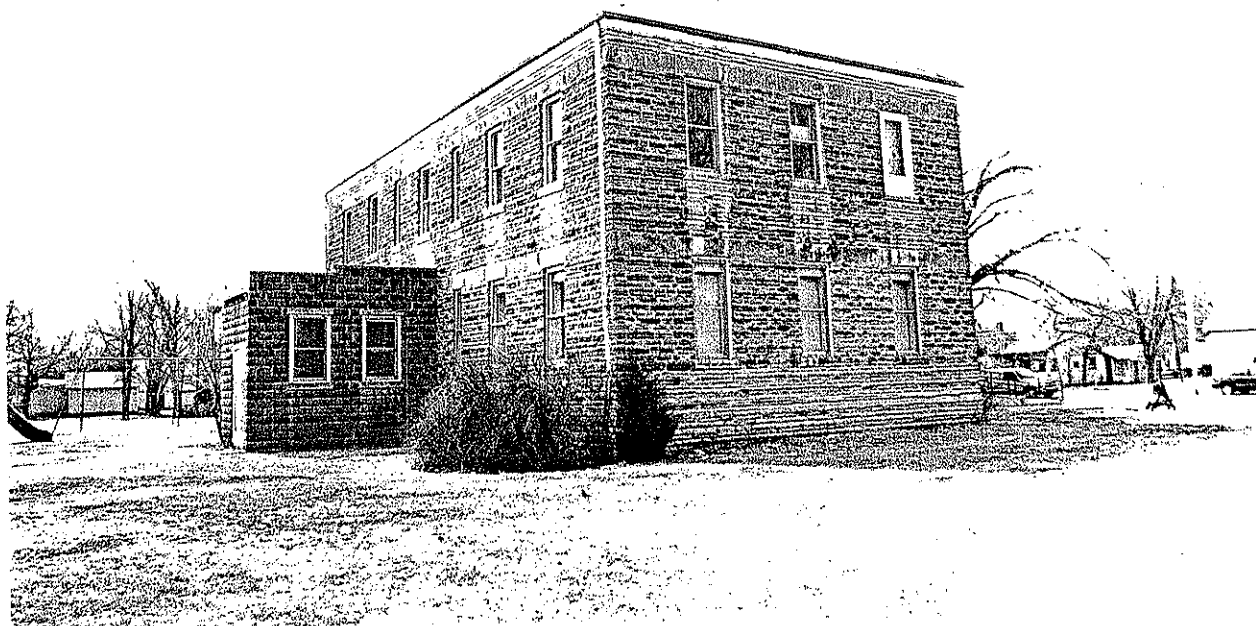
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 KANSAS—JEWELL CO.
 7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

6562 (NW)
 (MANIKATO NW)

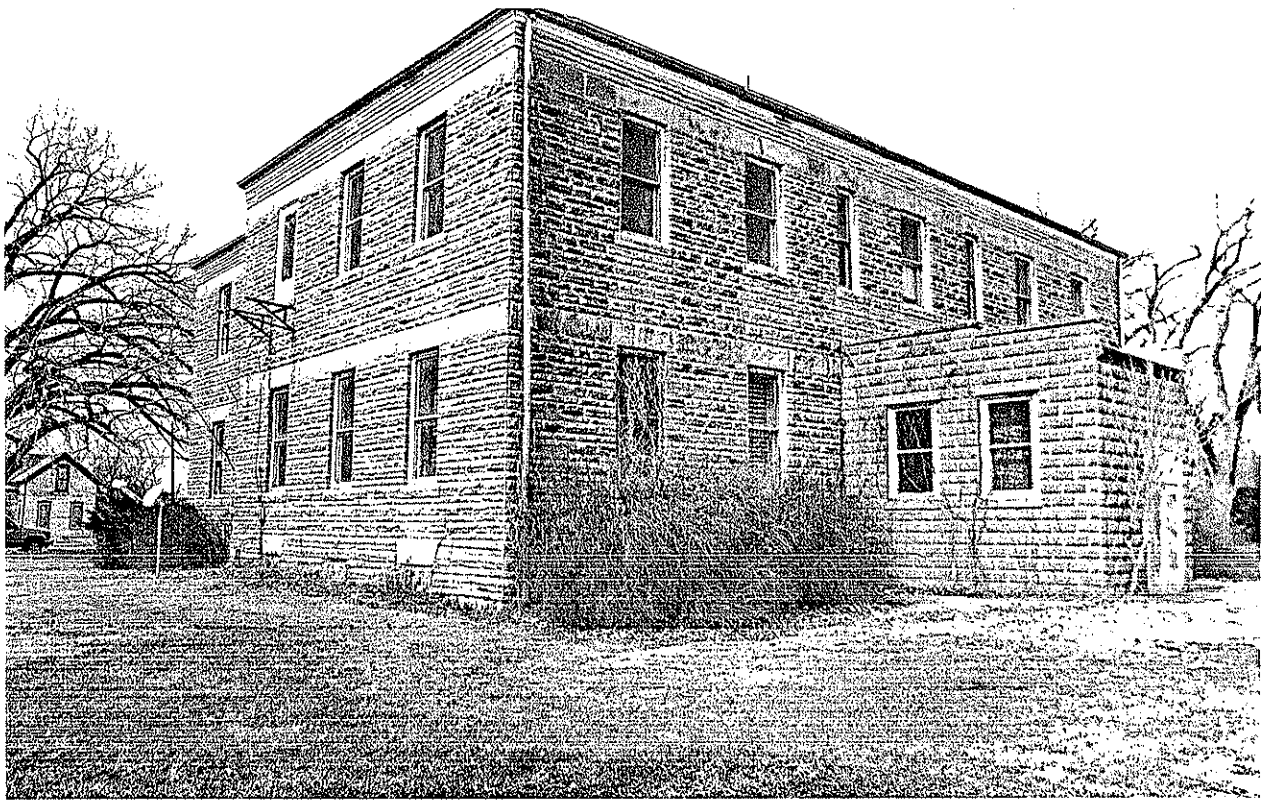




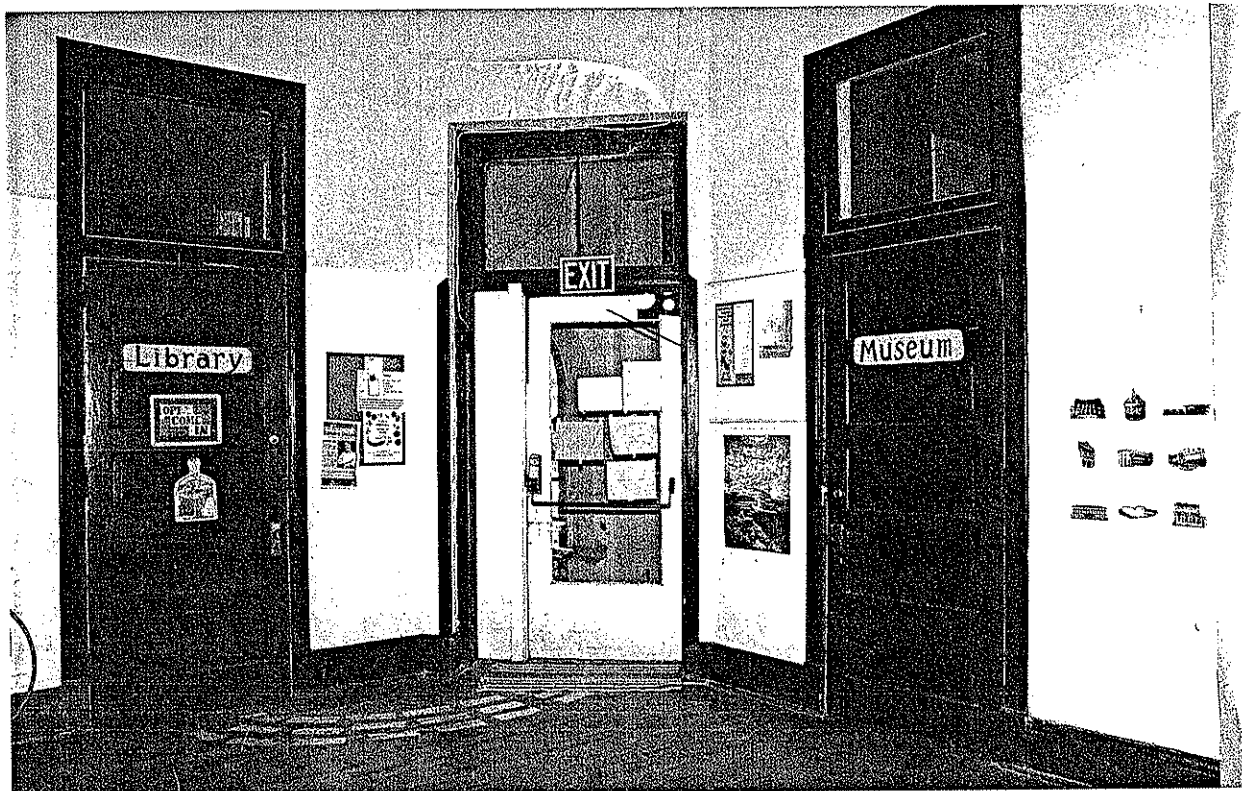
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Jewell County, KS ①



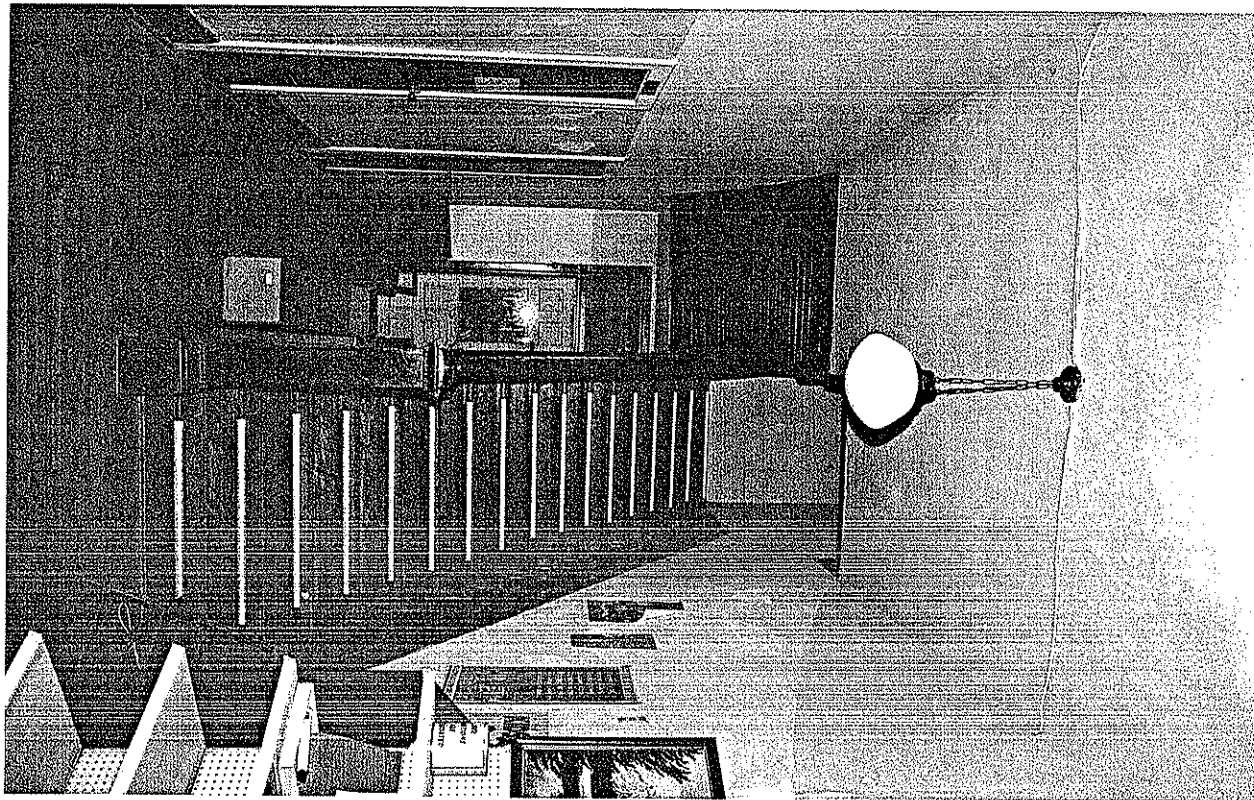
Burr Oak School
Jewell County, KS ②



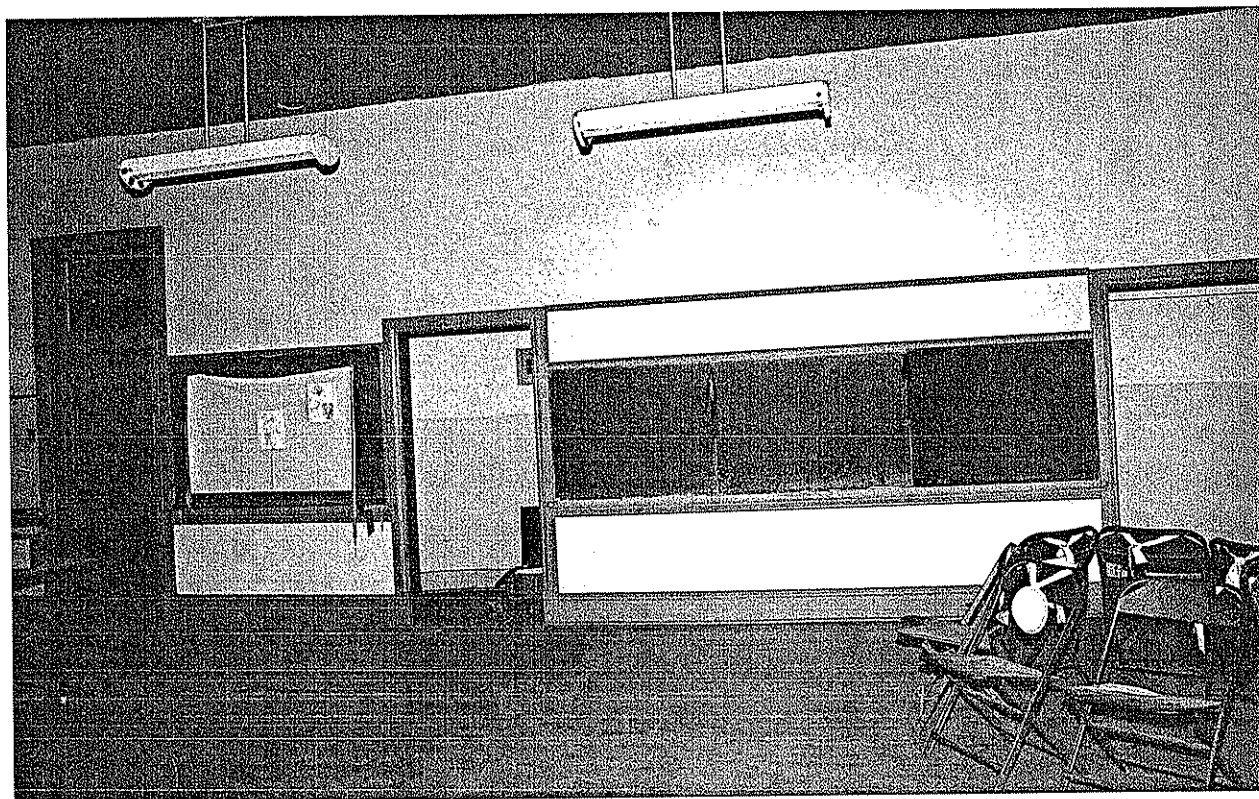
Burr Oak School
Jewell County, KS ③



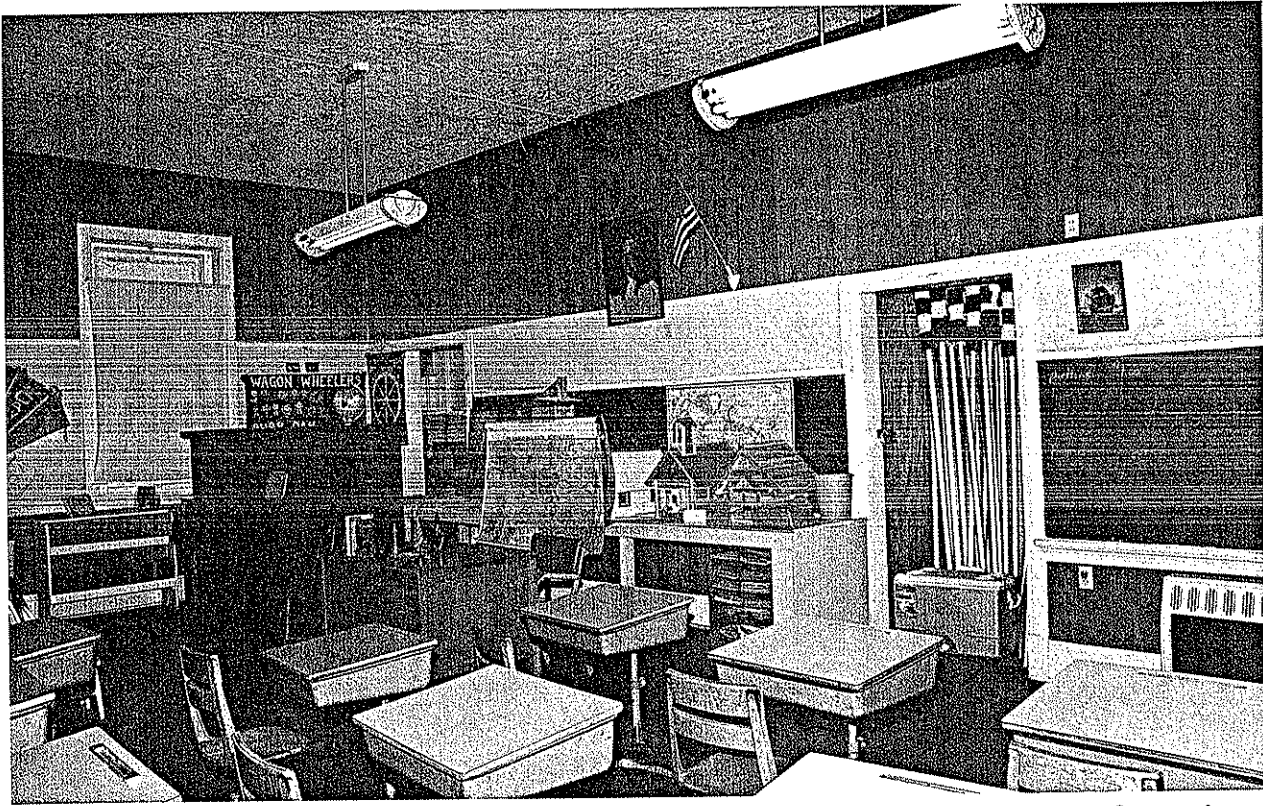
Burr Oak School
Jewell County, KS ④



Burr Oak School
Jewell County, KS ⑤



Burr Oak School
Jewell County, KS ⑥



Burr Oak School
Jewell County, KS ⑧